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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/668,819	09/22/2003	Russell D. Wilfert	H0005158	1949

128 7590 11/29/2004

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EXAMINER

FETSUGA, ROBERT M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3751

DATE MAILED: 11/29/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/668,819

Applicant(s)

WILFERT, RUSSELL D.

Examiner

Robert M. Fetsuga

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 September 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 22 September 2003 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 09/22/03.

- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

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1. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: Paragraph 0020, lines 3-4, and paragraph 0022, line 9, "208" designates different elements.

Appropriate correction is required.

2. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the subject matter" set forth in claim 9, and "coupled" feature set forth in claims 2 and 12, must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing

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figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

3. The specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. See 37 CFR 1.75(d)(1) and MPEP § 608.01(o). Correction of the following is required: Proper antecedent basis for the plug "outer surface" set forth in claims 1, 11 and 17, "coupled" language set forth in claims 2 and 12, and subject matter set forth in claims 8 and 16, could not be found in the specification. Applicant is reminded claim terminology in mechanical cases should appear in the descriptive portion of the specification by reference to the drawing(s).

4. Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

Claim 1 recites a "segment seal" (106) and a "sealed vent region" (418). The claim further recites the vent region has a "cross sectional area that is substantially equal to or less

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than the defined cross sectional flow area." Claims 11 and 17 recite similar subject matter. Implementation of this subject matter is neither taught by the instant disclosure nor evident to the examiner. The defined cross-sectional flow area (210) being significantly larger than the vent region area (208) would preclude any "net force" acting on the segment seal assembly 106 toward the outlet (110), as discussed at paragraph 0022, lines 12-16 of the specification. Furthermore, there would not appear to be any reduction in "differential pressure load across the segment seal assembly 106" as discussed at paragraph 0026, lines 1-3 of the specification. Rather, the pressure differential would appear to be increased. Moreover, claim 10 recites communication with a "valve body outlet" (110). Such an outlet would be understood to include no pressure relative to an inlet. The Stark reference is cited for disclosure concerning accepted fundamental operation of plug valve having pressure assisted sealing. Note the paragraph bridging both columns on page 2 of Stark.

5. Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

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The claim is unclear as to whether the "valve body" is intended to be part of the claimed combination since structure of the "valve" is defined as being connected thereto (lns. 7 and 20), but no positive structural antecedent basis therefor has been defined.

6. The claim hierarchy does not appear to be in accordance with MPEP 608.01(m). Claims remaining at allowance may require renumbering.

7. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. Claims 1-3 and 5-16, as best understood, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Melichar.

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The Melichar reference discloses a valve assembly comprising: a valve body 1 including openings (inlets and outlets) 8; a plug 12 including a flow passage 20; a segment seal assembly including a body 24 having an opening 25, a seal gland (receiving 28), a seal 28, and a vent region 26; a backup ring 29; a spring 31; a bearing assembly 6; and engagement sections 15, as claimed. Re claims 1 and 10, any one of the openings 8 would appear to meet the structure defined by the term "outlet".

9. Claims 4 and 17-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Melichar and Brown.

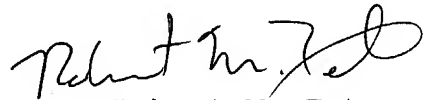
The Melichar valve assembly further comprises an actuator assembly 39.

Although the actuator assembly of the Melichar valve assembly may not receive control signals (automated), as claimed, attention is directed to the Brown reference which discloses an analogous valve assembly which further includes an automated actuator assembly (col. 2 lns. 39-44). Therefore, in consideration of Brown, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to associate control signal operation with the Melichar valve assembly in order to facilitate use in remote locations.

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10. Applicant is referred to MPEP 714.02 and 608.01(o) in responding to this Office action.

11. Any inquiry concerning this communication should be directed to Robert M. Fetsuga at telephone number 703/308-1506 who can be most easily reached Monday through Thursday.



Robert M. Fetsuga
Primary Examiner
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